

Please join us for our next presentation, **"Conquering Polio in America: The Cutter Incident and Beyond,"** on **January 25, 2017**.

Dr. Neal Nathanson will discuss the 1955 Cutter incident. Dr. Alan Hinman and Dr. Walter Orenstein will discuss the different polio vaccines that were in use.

We invite to you share your personal stories and experiences by emailing us at WeWereThere@cdc.gov.

Please be sure to visit the Stephen B. Thacker Library to explore their collection for this subject.

Special thanks to the David J. Sencer CDC Museum. We encourage you to visit the museum and learn more about the history of CDC.

Acknowledgements

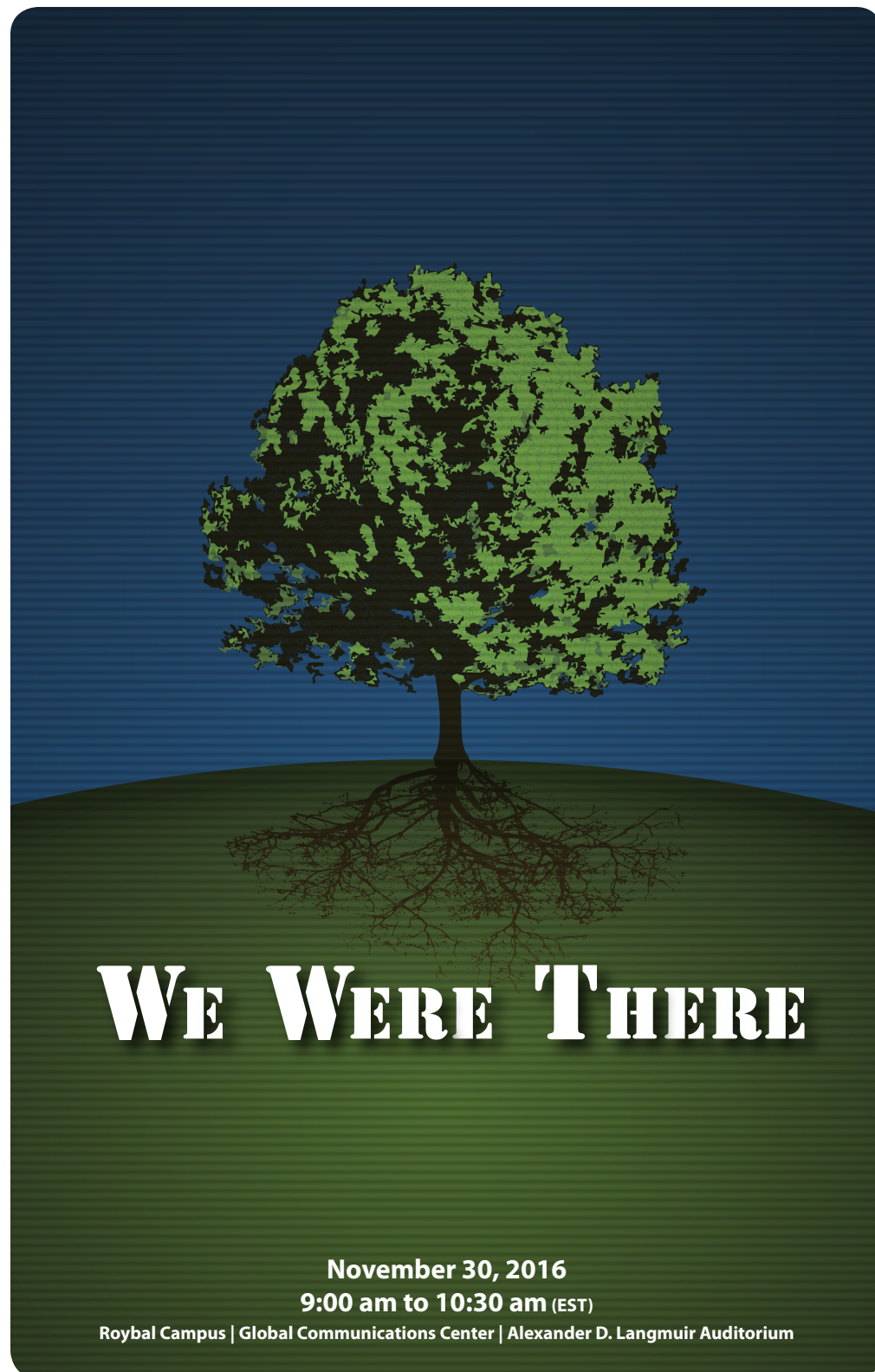
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Facilitated by:

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**U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services**
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention



Folic Acid, Birth Defects and Perspectives from China



R.J. Berry, MD, MPHTM

Dr. R.J. Berry is a graduate of the University of Utah (BS in Molecular and Genetic Biology) and Weill Cornell Medical College (MD) and Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine (MPHTM). While a medical student, he spent one year working at the Institute of Human Biology, Goroka, Papua New Guinea, which was influential in his choosing to be a pediatrician. In 1981 he joined the Epidemic Intelligence Service program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, GA and was assigned to the Birth Defects Branch, Chronic Diseases Division in the Center for Environmental Health. In 1988 he and colleagues in China began planning how to conduct a randomized clinical trial for the prevention of neural tube defects (NTDs). In 1991 he was assigned to Beijing as the US Project Director and led the team that established, through a study which included almost 250,000 women and their children, that use of 400 µg of folic acid alone prevents NTDs. In 1994, he was awarded the Friendship Award by the Chinese government, which is the highest award given to foreigners working in China. In 2011, the United States Public Health Service awarded Dr. Berry the Distinguished Service Medal in recognition of promoting the use of folic acid to prevent neural tube defects through innovative analytical work and ground-breaking publications.



Godfrey P. Oakley, Jr. MD, MSPM

Dr. Godfrey P. Oakley is the Director of the Center for Spina Bifida Research, Prevention and Policy and a Research Professor in the Department of Epidemiology at Rollins School of Public Health of Emory University. Dr. Oakley is the former Director of the Division of Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While at CDC, he and his team provided scientific and policy leadership critical to persuading the Food and Drug Administration to mandate folic acid fortification of “enriched” flour to prevent spina bifida, a disabling birth defect. Acknowledged as a worldwide expert, Dr. Oakley actively monitors scientific and policy issues concerning folic acid worldwide, and provides information to those considering fortification. He has authored and co-authored numerous scientific papers and served as president of the American Teratology Society and Chairman of the International Clearinghouse of Birth Defects Monitoring Systems. Among his awards have been the Distinguished Alumnus Award, University of Washington School of Public Health; three awards from the American Public Health Association; and the Bowman Gray Medical Alumni Distinguished Achievement Award.



Deborah Kowal, MA, PA

Deborah Kowal, MA, PA, is the Executive Editor and a co-author of Contraceptive Technology and its derivative works. As a medical writer specializing in women's reproductive health, maternal mortality, and infant survival, she has consulted for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization Collaborating Center in Reproductive Health, and other health organizations. For more than 30 years, she wrote the Public Health section in WorldBook Encyclopedia's Science Year Annuals. Formerly, Ms. Kowal provided clinical care at the University of Michigan Health Service.



David Erickson, DDS, PhD

We are delighted to announce that David Erickson will join us for the panel discussion. Dave provided support to Dr. Berry's work in China as his direct supervisor, and was instrumental in establishing birth defects surveillance in the United States and across the world.

Welcome to *We Were There*, a quarterly lecture series featuring past and present CDC researchers as they share their personal perspectives on historically important, CDC-led epidemiologic and laboratory investigations. This series provides insight into the rich past of CDC and gives the audience a chance to hear first-hand accounts from the responders.

Twenty-four years ago, the US Public Health Service recommended that women of childbearing age should daily consume 400 micrograms of folic acid to help prevent certain neural tube defects, namely, spina bifida and anencephaly. CDC played a leading role in the making of that important recommendation. Joining us for this special presentation are R. J. Berry, MD, MPHTM and Godfrey P. Oakley, Jr. MD, MSPM, who will discuss how they made one of the greatest discoveries in the history of public health. After their presentations, Deborah Kowal, MA, PA and David Erickson, DDS, PhD will join them to discuss how this investigation changed the course of public health history, and what it means for the future of birth defects in the United States and across the globe. All speakers will participate in a question and answer discussion.

Welcome

Phoebe Thorpe, MD, MPH

Opening Remarks

Tom Frieden, MD, MPH

Historical Video and Speaker Introductions

Phoebe Thorpe, MD, MPH

Presentation

R.J. Berry, MD, MPHTM
Godfrey P. Oakley, Jr. MD, MSPM
Deborah Kowal, MA, PA

Panel Discussion and Question & Answer

R.J. Berry, MD, MPHTM
Godfrey P. Oakley, Jr. MD, MSPM
Deborah Kowal, MA, PA
David Erickson, DDS, PhD

Closing Remarks

Phoebe Thorpe, MD, MPH